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ABSTRACT

This paper is designed to provide guidance to team chairs in conducting accreditation visits to member institutions of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. It is based on the experiences of a team chair who had conducted 33 accreditation visits, 14 of them as the team chair. It discusses the initial preparation for an accreditation visit, including advice on organizing a portable file system, making courtesy calls to the institution's president, preparing a team travel schedule, and using the telephone and fax to communicate with team members. It then reviews preliminary organizational efforts, such as making team assignments in the self-study report and developing a detailed appointment schedule so that team members can begin working effectively from the start of the visit. It concludes by providing recommendations on conducting team meetings and the visit itself. An appendix contains sample documents, schedules, and reports. (MDM)

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ED 383 277

ANNUAL MEETING
NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

THE ROLE OF THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION TEAM CHAIR IN CONDUCTING ACCREDITATION VISITS TO MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

JOSEPH G. SMOOT
MARCH 25, 1995
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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THE ROLE OF THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION TEAM CHAIR IN CONDUCTING ACCREDITATION VISITS TO MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

By

Joseph G. Smoot

The role of the team chair in conducting an accreditation visit for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association has evolved into a complex task. Team chairs have individual approaches to organizing and to conducting an accreditation visit. Good fortune enabled me to learn the skills of an accreditation visit under the tutelage of some outstanding educators. One can even discover, however, what not to do from an unorganized team chair!

To express my gratitude, I acknowledge my indebtedness to Robert L. Watson, among others, currently vice president for academic affairs at Mount Union College, who taught me about the role and responsibility of a team chair. From Bob, I learned on three different occasions how to prepare for a visit, use balanced judgment, develop "patterns of evidence" before that concept became a part of report writing, and give attention to the clarity of writing style.

Also, Charles J. "Tony" Stoneburner, retired Professor of English at Denison University graced two teams that I chaired. Tony taught me that NCA report language need not contain cliches and jargon linked together with weak verbs. I must confess, however, that his fascinating language style

still challenges me as I sometimes search for descriptive words that convey the precision of an idea. Words flow from Tony; for me, the use of a thesaurus must suffice.

My understanding of the task draws on the experience of thirty-one NCA team visits with thirteen of these as a team chair and four more as NCA coordinator in joint visits with other professional accrediting associations. My visits have included small and large private colleges, seminaries, specialized schools such as those in nursing in hospital settings, and public universities. My experience also includes focused visits, initial and continuing candidacy visits, and initial and continuing accreditation visits. These varied opportunities may permit me to provide insights and perceptions beyond the scope of this paper.

The team chair must master the Handbook of Accreditation. The Handbook serves as an indispensable guide to conducting an accreditation visit for the North Central Association. Please review the Handbook paying attention to the entire document well before you begin to concentrate on a specific team assignment. My advice to you is to set aside a block of time to read the Handbook through in its entirety in one or two sittings. Mark it sparingly, for sooner or later, you will probably refer to all of it as you confront particular situations in your institutional visits. Chapter Seven, "Logistics for Evaluation Visits," will guide you as you develop your own approach to planning and executing an accreditation visit.

These comments focus entirely on the comprehensive accreditation visit for continued accreditation. I have grouped them under appropriate headings to provide some organizational coherence to the remarks. At the end, I have placed a series of attachments that relate to the sections of this paper.

INITIAL PREPARATION

In preparing to conduct an accreditation visit for the North Central Association, I use an Accordion File to organize the correspondence and documents from the staff and the institution as well as my correspondence and materials prepared for the team members and the NCA staff. In some cases, large self-study reports and extensive institutional materials require a second file. Keeping the paper all together enables me to transport the file home in the evening and on the weekends more easily.

I also organize my computer disk to hold the documents as they are created. A disk index to the documents contains the code used for each document. This code enables me to recognize documents easily on the screen or go immediately to the index should I have any question about a particular document. One needs to organize a disk carefully to save time. The random naming of documents at the moment often escapes the later recollection of what document the name signifies. Some computer users fail to develop a document-naming system and consequently have to call up several documents before they get the one they want to use. Every

device to save time pays rich dividends for the team chair. (See Attachments, pp. 1-2).

FIRST CONTACTS

After receiving the packet of materials that contain the previous team report, I review the document to become familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the institution as perceived by the previous team and to understand their recommendation.

My first telephone conversation with my NCA staff liaison enables me to discover any recent information that may have surfaced about the institution or other particular problems that may exist regarding the visit. The chair needs to keep the staff member informed of the preparation for the visit. I usually send the NCA staff member with whom I work a set of the team materials referred to later in this paper and included in the attachments.

I telephone the president of the institution as a courtesy call two to three months before the visit. The president usually asks me to work directly with the self-study coordinator. The self-study coordinator may be an administrator or have access to administrative processes. At this time, the institutional representative will confirm with me whether the Self-Study Report will arrive as required at least a month before the scheduled visit.

On my most recent visit to a public university, I had nine team members in addition to myself. The complexity of my own schedule as well as theirs required me to use the

telephone, the fax machine, and over-night express mail exclusively. I hope to begin using E-Mail this summer. Presently, I cannot say how electronic mail may become integrated in the communication process for NCA accreditation visits.

TEAM TRAVEL SCHEDULE

My first task involves the setting of the travel schedule. The North Central Association has a designated travel agency. The institution usually gives me advice on airline possibilities based on their travel experiences. More remote places require a greater coordination effort. I ask the institution to recommend a convenient hotel or motel and ascertain rates. Often, the institution will possess a discount arrangement with the hotel or motel for their official guests. Arrangements for transportation to the hotel or motel should be made at this time. In some instances, institutional representatives meet the team members at the airport; in others, vans from the lodging place provide the means of transport. (See Attachments, p. 3).

My next task involves contacting each team member by telephone to become acquainted and to discuss individual travel plans. After making their travel arrangements, the team members fax their schedules to me. I compile the team travel schedules, list the hotel name, address, and telephone number, and fax copies of the document to each team member and the institution. Knowledge of the travel

schedule permits the team members to keep abreast of the arrangements for the visit and possibly enables them to meet other team members in an airport and become acquainted during travel. Also, the address and telephone number of the place of lodging allows the team members to leave these with those who may need to reach them during the visit.

TEAM SELF-STUDY REPORT ASSIGNMENTS

After concluding the travel planning, I peruse the institutional materials such as the catalogs, handbooks, and other documents as soon as they reach me. I may read every faculty member's name and degree listing published in the catalog as an example of a way to absorb information about the institution. Next, I review the previous accreditation report(s) for the second time making notes of relevant facts. Finally, I read the Self-Study Report rapidly for the first time.

My second preparation document, the Team Self-Study Report Assignments, matches areas of the Self-Study Report with the expertise and experiences of individual team members. The purpose of this procedure assures me that each team member will not only specialize in areas of the report but also read all of it to obtain a general knowledge of the document. I fax this assignment report to the team members to secure any comments they may desire to convey to me. (See Attachments, pp. 4-5).

One member of the team needs to concentrate on the assessment of student academic achievement. This area has

become a major segment of the team report and an essential component of the accreditation decision. Because of its critical nature related to accreditation, the team chair should also become involved in reviewing assessment of the institution and perhaps include one other person. All team members must keep a conscious eye on assessment.

No institution can ever say that a team that I have chaired has treated the Self-Study Report lightly. The assignment document motivates a majority of the team members to read the report at home, particularly the sections related to their writing assignments, rather than after they board the airplane!

TEAM REPORT ASSIGNMENTS

After a second reading of the Self-Study Report, I begin organizing the Team Report Assignments document. This document will differ somewhat from the self-study reading assignments, because of the different format of the team report, although the two essentially mesh. You will note that in this document, I leave a space for the team to make suggestions about the content of the Team Report. In recent visits, I have added a narrative statement to the document that contains my expectations of the team during the visit and the writing of the report. (See Attachments, pp. 6-9).

PRELIMINARY VISITING TEAM SCHEDULE

While working on travel arrangements and team assignments, I also communicate with the institutional representative about a preliminary schedule. During the

first day, I strive to conduct most of the meetings of various committees, faculties, and other groups as most team members will want to attend these. That frees the second day for the team members to roam the campus pursuing interests that have emerged from their reading, preliminary team discussions, and the group meetings. In some instances, I have asked team members to list individual appointments on the second day before arrival. That procedure has not worked very well. Now, I arrange for them to have their second day's schedule tentatively set by the morning of our first day so that the institution can conveniently make the appointments. Variations in scheduling depend on the size of the institution to a great extent. After a reasonably firm schedule exists, I fax it to the team members for their comments in order to make adjustments as required. (See Attachments, pp. 10-14).

These four documents, the Team Travel Schedule, the Team Self-Study Report Assignments, the Team Report Assignments, and the Visiting Team Schedule permit each team member to gain a perspective of the scope of the visit. These documents help to create an awareness of the extensive amount of work required and a confidence that careful preparations have assured an efficient use of each team members' time in making the visit.

PRELIMINARY TEAM REPORT DOCUMENTS

I prepare three or four preliminary documents based on the Self-Study Report and institutional materials. The

preparation of the Accreditation History document allows me to put the current team visit in perspective in a concise way. It helps the team members to understand more clearly what lies before them. If the team members judge it an accurate presentation from the written materials and the visit confirms it, then it becomes a part of the Team Report. (See Attachments, pp. 15-16).

Next, I review the concerns of the last accreditation visit and how the institution has addressed them either in a previous focused visit or in the Self-Study Report. The Concerns of the Previous Team(s) document focuses the team on the ability of the institution to address concerns. It reveals how well they accomplished the task. The document also provides a specific statement to help the team ascertain that the institution has truly considered the concerns and taken appropriate actions. Some concerns linger unaddressed for years even though the institution may say otherwise. (See Attachments, pp. 17-21).

An example of how a Self-Study Report may mislead a team comes from a recent team visit that involved the institution's approach and attitude regarding strategic planning. The previous NCA team first identified the lack of a strategic plan as a concern and a focused evaluation team later found that the institution had not properly addressed the issue and continued it as a concern. After pursuing the concern throughout the first day, I finally secured the institutional leaders' admission that they did

not have a strategic plan in place, although the Self-Study Report had indicated otherwise. This surprised several team members who thought they did have a comprehensive coordinated plan. This perception included the individual assigned to planning who had contested my judgment on the issue. The president and vice president for academic affairs both confirmed my understanding of the matter late on the first day. We all know that many institutions have a hazy planning process that may work even though they do not organize the various components of the plan and the groups involved into a comprehensive written strategic plan and process.

My third preliminary document, the General Institutional Requirements document, strives to use the patterns of evidence in the Self-Study Report to test if the institution does indeed meet the General Institutional Requirements. This preliminary document enables me to keep the team focused on the GIRs during the visit, correlate them with the Criteria for Accreditation, and test the validity of the findings about how the institution meets the GIRs and the Criteria. Recently, a North Central Team had a question about governance but failed to relate the GIR to the appropriate Criterion in the report or discuss it specifically with the staff member. The issue finally surfaced at the Commission level which referred it back to an Accreditation Review Committee. The issue should have been addressed during the visit, a solution arranged, and a

concern stated, a report required, or a focused visit scheduled to address a basic component of the General Institutional Requirements. (See Attachments, pp. 22-26).

For some visits, I have also prepared a preliminary General Education document, particularly if difficulties appear to exist either from the previous team report or the Self-Study Report. In other instances, I make arrangements with one of the team members to concentrate on the general education issue before and during the visit. Time does govern how much one can accomplish before the scheduled visit. Time spent before the visit, however, assures the chair of a much more thorough visit and a fairer one as well. The team members come to the visit relaxed because they know their role. They work more effectively. The preliminary documents also become the basis for sections of the report often referred to as "boiler plate." For me, they are far more significant than that.

By now, you have begun to recognize the extensive time required to chair a North Central Association accreditation team. While the NCA provides a small extra honorarium for the team chair, it does not begin to compensate one financially for the time contributed to such a complex enterprise. The NCA, however, invests the team chair particularly, and the team members with the honor of participating in a significant educational process. The greatest reward comes from the remarkable laboratory that an accreditation visit provides on learning about and helping

to shape higher education issues and processes. Attention today on what constitutes scholarship has broadened considerably. Truly, an NCA accreditation visit provides a professional experience that includes personal interaction, judgment about acceptable higher education practices, and report writing. Leading an NCA accreditation team deserves recognition as a major contribution to learning and society.

TEAM MEETINGS

I try to hold my first team meeting late in the afternoon of the arrival day and review the three preliminary documents. At that point, I discuss the responsibility placed on the team, the need to act professionally in all contacts, and the seriousness of the undertaking. I also discuss the report style, the patterns of evidence now required as the organizing concept in writing the report, and the strengths and concerns the team wish to suggest as the visit begins. As North Central Association consultant-evaluators, team members will have an opportunity to give advice based on their experience relating to specific problems confronting the institution. While this advice does not bear directly on the accreditation decision, it does make a significant contribution to the team report.

I also reiterate at the first meeting my expectation that the team members will hand me their written reports before they leave. In a recent visit, I left the institution with most of the team's assigned writing tasks

completed on computer disks. That enabled me to prepare the first draft of the report more quickly and edit it on my computer screen the first time.

For the Sunday evening dinner, the team will either eat alone or at a small dinner on campus strictly limited in time and to selected institutional representatives of the administration and self-study committee. A dinner does permit the team to begin to recognize the key people at the institution involved in the visit. Often, a reception after the team has eaten alone will accomplish just as much. After the dinner, the team can meet for perhaps a half hour to review any questions they may have. This permits them to have two or more hours in their room to make additional preparations for the visit and organize their writing assignments.

I do not hold late night meetings. At the end of the first day, I meet the team in the campus team room before going to the lodging place. Each team member reports information and their impressions received during the day. We review the preliminary documents again to see if problems have arisen during the activities of the day concerning them. We identify concerns to examine more closely on the second day. We confirm perceived strengths gained from reading the Self-Study Report and the first day's appointments. Even though the team members may feel weary, I find this reporting session nearer to the "scene of

action" more useful than waiting until after dinner for a longer session.

Team members may feel after the first day that I work them too hard. Invariably, at the end of the visit, they thank me for keeping everyone focused. Intensive work at the site assures a more accurate report and enables the team members to return to their campuses and busy careers without extensive writing assignments still uncompleted.

At dinner that first day, discussion may turn to questions and topics to explore further. A short second meeting after dinner allows time for comments, questions, any additional discussion, and a summary. This schedule provides time during the evening of the first day to begin writing. Some team members choose rather to retire early and arise early on the morning of the second day to begin their writing, review their materials, and plan for their visits that day. Some, like me, burn the candle at both ends! The team chair may properly begin evaluating the perceived strengths and concerns during the evening of the first day after the team meeting.

Refining the strengths and concerns and discussing them with institutional representatives and team members during the second day will tend to confirm them. During the second day, the team members focus their efforts on completing their individual appointments and any group meetings they may need to attend. The team chair may speak with the president giving a general statement on how the visit is

progressing. This may lower the president's blood pressure or raise it depending on the point of view. Sometimes, the president will take the team chair into confidence and reveal sensitive information that will help clarify some issues. Try not to surprise the president at the end of the visit. I prefer to let the president know what I will say in the exit interview ahead of the event. At the end of the second day, the team may meet briefly on campus. The dinner on the second day may be more relaxed without consciously talking about the visit. A longer meeting after dinner permits the team to come to a preliminary agreement about the list of strengths and concerns as well as advice they wish to give. I also ask them to write out their advice as part of their assignment. Later, I incorporate the team's collective advice into the report.

During the day, the team members may have studied institutional documents placed in the team's meeting room on campus. They will most likely select some material related to their areas of the report to take to their room. One of the greatest difficulties of the visit is to have enough time to review the documents assembled by the institution. I have begun to think that specific team assignments to the documents will assure that at the minimum, each document has been reviewed by a team member to identify how it might support the conclusions of the team report. During the evening of the second day, the team chair must concentrate on the strengths and weaknesses.

The morning of the third day may find some team members making last-minute individual visits. The team chair may need to telephone the NCA staff member directing the visit if serious problems have occurred. The earlier the staff person can be notified of problems affecting the accreditation decision, the better a solution may be reached in handling it in the report. The team chair should also discuss with the team in specific detail the wording of the strengths, concerns, and accreditation recommendation. As I have a portable laser printer, the task of printing a document for review has become easier. The exit interview may take place just before lunch, during lunch, of just after lunch. The team chair speaks for the team. Any comments or questions may clarify what the team chair reports to the institution. I encourage team members to help me answer specific questions if they relate to their area of the visit.

Almost every visit will have a unique occurrence that requires a considered response. Recently, I encountered a Neo-Nazi group who wanted to take over the Open Meeting scheduled for those who have not had an opportunity to speak to a team member either privately or in a public group. On another occasion, a team member left early. The team member, a college president, had not explored a bonded indebtedness situation sufficiently. The president of the institution raised a question about it during the exit interview. I suggested that we would review it before the

report became final and invited the institution to submit a white paper on the topic. Subsequently, I removed the concern about the institution's bonded indebtedness with the team's concurrence.

Probably a paper such as this one could continue on for many more pages. I choose to end it here and proceed with the discussion of the role of the team chair through engaged dialogue with me and each other. After all, as experienced consultant-evaluators who have served on several North Central Association accreditation teams, you have had numerous opportunities to observe your own team chairs. Now, you have the opportunity to improve on our record.

ATTACHMENTS

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

ACCREDITATION VISIT TO
UNITED STATES UNIVERSITY

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NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNITED STATES UNIVERSITY

VISITING TEAM TRAVEL SCHEDULE

	Arrival/March 19, 1995			Departure/March 22, 1995		
	Airline	Flight	Time	Airline	Flight	Time
Joseph Smoot	American	#4139	03:04PM	American	#4140	04:20PM
Team Member 1	American	#4139	03:04PM	American	#4140	04:20PM
Team Member 2	American	#4307	09:35PM+	American	#4140	04:20PM
Team Member 3	Northwest	#3187	03:30PM	American	#4140	04:20PM
Team Member 4	American	#4139	03:04PM	American	#4140	04:20PM
Team Member 5	American	#4139	03:04PM	American	#4193	12:37PM
Team Member 6	American	#4139	03:04PM	American	#4140	04:20PM
Team Member 7	American	#4225	11:56AM	American	#4140	04:20PM
Team Member 8	Northwest	#3336	11:59PM+	American	#4193	12:27PM
Team Member 9	American	#4139	03:04PM	American	#4140	04:20PM

+ Arrival Saturday, March 18

United States University has arranged a room for each team member at the Ramada Inn, 412 South Rangeline Road, United States of America 55555

(Telephone # 871 321-6000). Ramada Inn has an Airport Shuttle which comes regularly to the airport.

Temperatures will probably be in the 50s during the day and 40s at night. Please do not hold me to that but dress accordingly!

The Team will have three state cars for transportation.

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNITED STATES UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MARCH 20-22, 1995

PRELIMINARY TEAM SELF-STUDY REPORT ASSIGNMENTS

1. SELF-STUDY REPORT

Each team member should read the entire Self-Study Report to prepare to ask questions and to offer advice about any aspect of the visit to the United States University. These suggested "specializations" for in-depth preparation for the visit relate to the more complete assignments in the Team Report Assignments. These assignments will enable each team member to function better during the visit and assure that the Self-Study Report receives careful and thoughtful attention before and during the visit.

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2. PRELIMINARY ANALYSES

As chair, I will prepare preliminary analyses of several areas based on the analyses in the Self-Study Report and other materials. As you complete your preparation, I ask each of you to develop a list of Strengths and Concerns as you perceive them. We will discuss these materials Sunday evening and verify the consensus during the visit.

A.	Accreditation History	Smoot
B.	Concerns of the 1984 Evaluation Team	Smoot
C.	Report of the 1989 Focused Evaluation Team	Smoot
D.	General Education/Liberal Studies	Smoot
E.	General Institutional Requirements	Smoot
F.	Strengths and Concerns	Team

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNITED STATES UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MARCH 20-22, 1995

PRELIMINARY TEAM REPORT ASSIGNMENTS

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A. Organization of the report	Smoot
B. Accreditation history	Smoot
C. Structure and scope of the team visit	Smoot
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B. Report of the 1989 Focused Evaluation Team	Smoot/Team
C. General Institutional Requirements	Smoot/Team
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Academic Computing	Team4
Learning Resources Center	Smoot
Broadcast Services	Smoot

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5. Institution demonstrates integrity	Team9/Smoot/Team
Academic Quality Assurance	Team9/Smoot
Regional/Professional Accreditation	Smoot
Policies and Procedures	Smoot
Assessment and Planning	Smoot
Faculty Diversity/Credentials/Professional	Team4
Compliance Issues/Affirmative Action	Team4
Public Accountability	Smoot
Intercollegiate Athletics	Team6
Conclusion	Team
Summary of institutional strengths	Team
Summary of institutional concerns	Team

PART III	ADVICE	Team
PART IV	RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE	Team
PART V	SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER EVALUATION AREAS	Team
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
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	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
PART VI	COMMENTS	

TEAM REPORT

As you prepare for this visit, please note the strengths of the institution and any concerns that you identify in the course of your reading. Obviously, USU has identified what they consider their strengths and concerns to be. At the team's first meeting on Sunday evening, we will identify some of the strengths and concerns to test on Monday during the interviews. For example, we might ask the President's Council what three strengths they consider the greatest at United States University. In this way, our list of strengths and concerns will evolve naturally from our preparation and during the visit rather than merely during a marathon late-night session before the end of the visit. We will arrive at sound conclusions that we can defend if we use the creditable Self-Study Report and other documents judiciously.

As team chair, I have prepared a preliminary analysis of selected areas based on the Self-Study Report, previous NCA reports, and other materials. Please read these documents carefully and come prepared to review them at the opening team meeting. We will make necessary revisions to them during our team meetings. You will need to validate the Concerns of the 1984 Team and the General Institutional Requirements documents in the course of the visit.

Each report assignment is due in writing at the conclusion of the visit. As you give attention to your sections, please consider your writing style. I prefer for language to have an active sound without the use of jargon and cliches. Also, try to avoid the over-use of the verb to be.

In writing your report sections, strive to include a description of the topic using relevant statistical information, institutional viewpoints, and other insights gleaned from interviews and your reading. Keep the mission and goals in mind. Identify strengths and any concerns that you discover. As an example, the school sections should describe the school and its organization, the faculty and students, the departments and programs, particular entities such as centers or institutes, support information, strengths, and any concerns. Pay attention to the patterns of evidence cited in the Self-Study Report as you conduct your own evaluation of your assigned areas.

Thank you for giving your time to this significant endeavor. Accreditation in higher education requires the dedication of capable, professional people. You represent the rich accrediting resources of the North Central Association. Your work during this visit will hopefully help United States University to make continued improvement as an important institution of higher learning.

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNITED STATES UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MARCH 19 - 22, 1995

VISITING TEAM SCHEDULE

Sunday March 19, 1995

Time	Function	Location	Team/Person
05:00	Team Meeting	Ramada Inn R 112	Team
06:30	Dinner	Pioneer R/UC	Team
08:00	Return to Ramada Inn		Team
08:30	Team Meeting	Ramada Inn R 112	Team

NOTES

Monday, March 20

Team members not scheduled for a meeting at 3:00 PM or 4:00 PM may arrange appointments on Monday morning for that time or use the time in the resource room.

Team members should have a schedule plan for Tuesday's appointments ready to give to the appointments secretary early Monday morning.

Tuesday, March 21

Please schedule remaining appointments for Wednesday early Tuesday morning through the appointments secretary.

Wednesday, March 22

The Team will check out of the motel before proceeding to the campus on Wednesday morning. A University van will transport the team to the airport.

Monday, March 20, 1995

Time	Function	Location	Team/Person
07:45	Team Meeting	Dining Room B/UC	Team
08:00	President's Council	American Room/UC	Team
09:00	Academic Council	American Room/UC	Team
10:00	Accred Coord Team	American Room/UC	Team
11:00	Campus Tour		Team
12:00	Lunch/Board of Control	Pioneer B/UC	Team
01:00	Appointments		
	Tech/Applied Sci Dean	101A USA C	Team1
	Arts and Sciences Dean	359 States Room	Team7
	Beh Sci/Hum Ser/Edu Dean	307 Cities Room	Team/3Team4
	Business Dean	305 Brown Room	Team8
	Nursing/Allied Health Dean	204 Yellow Room	Team2
	Vice President/Finance	502 Green Room	Team5
	Vice President/Stud Aff	402 Purple Room	Team6
	Outcomes Assessment Committee	313 Red Room	Team9
			Smoot
02:00	School Faculties		
	Tech/Applied Sci/Faculty	423 Brown Room	Team1
	Arts and Sciences Faculty	346 Yellow Room	Team7
	Education Faculty	104 Green Room	Team3
	Beh Sci/Hum Services Faculty	146 Purple Room	Team4
	Business Faculty	203 Red Room	Team9
	Nursing/Allied Health Faculty	246 Smith Hall	Team2
	Director/Intercollegiate Ath	226 Smith Hall	Team6
	Assoc VP for Planning	503 Adm Center	Team5
	VP/Academic Affairs	610 Adm Center	Team9
	VP/Development/VP U Relations	603 Adm Center	Smoot
03:00	Other Group/Indiv Meetings		
	Univ Priorities Committee	239 Adm Center	Team5
	Academic Info Services Dean	203 Adm Center	Team4
			Smoot/Team9
	Academic Outreach/Assoc VP	309 Smith Hall	Team3
04:00			
	Graduate Studies Dean (Interim)	309 Smith Hall	Team3
04:30	Team Meeting	Dining Room B/UC	Team
06:00	Dinner		Team
07:30	Team Meeting	Ramada Inn 112	Team

Tuesday, March 21, 1995

Time	Function	Location	Team/Person
07:45	Team Meeting	Dining Room B/UC	Team
08:00			
08:30			
09:00			
09:30			
10:00			
10:30			
11:00			
11:30			
12:00	Lunch/Alumni	Pioneer B/UC	Team
01:00			
01:30			
02:00			
02:30	Open Meeting*		
03:00	Student Leaders		Team
03:45	Academic Senate	Quad 2 Cafeteria	Team
04:30	Team Meeting	Dining Room B/UC	Team
6:00	Dinner		Team
7:30	Team Meeting	Ramada Inn R 112	Team

*Individuals wishing to meet privately with the team please schedule through the chair

Wednesday, March 22, 1995

Time	Function	Location	Team/Person
07:45	Team Meeting	Dining Room B/UC	Team
08:00			
08:30			
09:00			
09:30			
10:00	Team Meeting	Dining Room B/UC	Team
11:00	Working Session	Dining Room B/UC	Team
12:00	Working Lunch	Dining Room B/UC	Team
01:00	Working Session	Dining Room B/UC	Team
02:00	Exit Interview	TBA	Team
03:00	Campus Departure		Team

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNITED STATES UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

VISITING TEAM SCHEDULE

Groups To Meet

Board of Control

President's Council

Academic Council

Academic Senate

Accreditation Coordination Team

Academic Outcomes Assessment Subcommittee/Academic Senate
(Formerly Outcomes Assessment Committee)

Strategic Planning/University Priorities Committee

Student Government President/Associated Students of USU

BOARD OF CONTROL MEMBERS

Name	Position	Occupation	Residence
Joseph Johnson Chair			Capital City
Marilyn Spotswood Vice Chair			Scottsville
John Anderson			Abbotsford
Sandra Jean Ayers			Deer Park
Richard Miller			Metropolis
Donald Ellison			Center City
Robert Randall			Johnsonville
Joyce Gilbert			Williamsburg

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNITED STATES UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT
March 20-22, 1995

ACCREDITATION HISTORY/PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

United States University traces its origins to the founding of the USU State Normal School which opened in 1887. Through the years, the name changed to USU State Teachers College in 1921, to USA College of Education in 1944, and to USA State College in 1954. In 1961, the new State Constitution expanded the mission, organized a Board of Control, and provided for the change in name to United States University.

USA offered a two-year teacher's program until 1917 when the institution established a four-year bachelor's degree. The institution cooperated with the University of Mars for several decades in offering a graduate education program. USA State College established a Master of Arts degree in 1960.

The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association first granted accreditation to United States University in 1916. Periodic reviews occurred on a regular cycle. In 1966, the Commission granted accreditation of the University at the Master of Arts degree level approving several specific graduate programs in the 1960s. In 1972, after a comprehensive visit, the Commission granted accreditation to United States University at the Specialist degree level.

The most recent North Central Association comprehensive review occurred in 1984. At that time, United States University faced an adverse financial condition due to the State's recent fiscal emergency and a declining enrollment. A relatively new administration had adjusted the mission and instituted a new planning effort. The Commission accepted the NCA team's recommendation for continued accreditation at the Specialist degree level with the next comprehensive visit scheduled for 1994-1995. The team, however, did recommend a Focused Evaluation Visit to review several serious concerns in 1989-1990. That visit occurred in 1989 and resulted in a continuation of accreditation with no further actions or reports required.

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNITED STATES UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT
March 20-22, 1995

CONCERNS OF THE 1984 VISITING TEAM/PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The United States University Self-Study Report addresses briefly the concerns of the 1984 NCA valuation team, the University's response, and the 1989 NCA focused evaluation team's findings. The 1994 NCA evaluation team has examined the reports of the two previous teams and reports that USU made a satisfactory initial response to the concerns. As noted by the 1989 NCA team, however, the University needed to continue to address the concerns relating to the College of Technology and the linking of planning and budgeting. The 1994 Self-Study Report does address these issues and the 1995 NCA team has reviewed the matters in considerable detail.

Concern #1: Clarity of Mission. The 1984 NCA team examined the recently drafted and updated mission statement and noted that the "more focused statement intended to provide direction for program development and for resource reallocation." It also stressed the "responsibility to serve as an important influence for the revitalization of the economic and cultural base of the region" as an expanded role for United States University. The team concluded that the mission statement required "further clarification regarding the kinds of responses individual program areas are encouraged to make as a part of the University's

enhanced community service theme." The team also felt USU should "give further attention in its mission statement to the institutional themes that distinguish United States University from similar institutions." In subsequent years, the University prepared a new mission statement with wide participation that the Board of Control approved in 1988. The 1989 NCA focused evaluation team regarded the revised statement "satisfactory to the situation in which United States University finds itself," "a great improvement over the document in place at the time of the earlier NCA evaluation," and a correction of "the clarity concerns of the 1984 Report."

Concern # 2: Organizational Effectiveness. The 1984 NCA team observed that the University had vacancies in a number of key administrative positions while others had relatively recent appointments. Noting "a widespread optimistic attitude on campus toward the new leadership team as it guides the institution in identifying its prospects for growth and development," the team concluded that "any assessment of administrative effectiveness, however, would be premature at this time." The 1989 NCA focused evaluation team found that the president had "assembled a strong team of administrators and designed an organizational structure which is appropriate to the task with satisfactory reporting lines." The team expressed its judgment in their report that "the organizational concerns of the 1984 team have been satisfactorily addressed . . . ."

Concern # 3: Alternate Revenue Source Development. The 1984 team identified the need for United States University to make "further

efforts to develop extramural funding sources from both the private and competitive public sectors . . . to develop its areas of academic excellence and free its Development Fund to concentrate on raising income-generating endowment monies." USU had just weathered a severe financial crisis stemming from state funding curtailment just prior to the 1984 NCA visit. The University addressed the issue by appointing a director of research development and a vice president for university advancement. Significant increases in funding led the 1989 NCA focused evaluation team to report that "the team was impressed with the institution's response to the 1984 concern and encourages the University to continue its efforts to attract alternative revenue sources."

Concern # 4: Management Information Systems. The 1984 NCA team found that United States University did not have an effective management information system in place at the time of the visit. The 1989 NCA team concurred that while the University generated considerable data, administrators could rely on "no one set of institutional data." While units collected data, the University had no "single source for enrollment data, admissions data, demographic data and the like." The University appointed a director of institutional research in 1985. The director developed a data base and generated a planned sequence of management reports based on a statistical analysis of the University's operation. The 1989 NCA team reported that "everything is now in place at United States University to provide all the data necessary for institutional management,

decision making and for strategic planning." The team further expressed pleasure with the "long range institutional commitment to the MIS as evident from the $1.8 million allocation to the unit over the next five years for people, hardware, software and additional computers and training programs."

Concern # 5: The Academic Role of the Skills Center. The 1984 NCA team identified the vocational skills center as perhaps USU's "most troublesome concern." They cited lack of direction and failure to place the center "within the University's academic plan" as significant concerns. Confusion existed on the future of the center as to either its integration within the University or its organization as a separate community college. USU refused to accept the credits in transfer while other public institutions did accept them. In 1986, the Skills Center became the School of Technology. The University blended general education requirements with the vocational training programs. The 1989 NCA focused evaluation team acknowledged "that progress has been made on the assimilation of this marvelous facility into the fabric of the University. However, it is the team's opinion that the University community must resolve the issues surrounding the integration of the School into the University in the very near future so the institution can get on with its educational mission."

Concern # 6: Linking Planning and Budgeting. The 1984 team observed that "sound fiscal management undoubtedly played a significant role in USU's financial survival during the 1980-82 period, and for the soundness of its financial condition today."

The team noted that "it is unfortunate however that neither during that period nor in its prioritizations today is the University able to benefit from an integrated planning and budgeting process." The team observed that many recognized the need for the integration, and the University had taken steps to develop an effective strategic planning process. The team recommended that United States University focus "whatever energies are necessary to couple the budgeting and planning processes as quickly as it is feasible to accomplish." The 1989 NCA focused evaluation team commended the University on establishing the Commission on the Future to assist with planning, the establishment of a five-year review cycle of all programs, and the development of adequate institutional research data through its management information system. The 1989 team observed that "some thought and consideration has been given" by United States University to the 1984 team's recommendation of developing "a strategic planning process." The team concluded, however, "that there is much work to be done before a full-blown strategic planning process is in place."

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNITED STATES UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT
March 20-22, 1995

GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS/PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

In conducting the evaluation visit, the team has reviewed the resource materials prepared by United States University for the visit as well as the Self-Study Report. Through extensive interviews on campus, and through individual and group analysis, the team has examined the University's efforts to demonstrate that it satisfies each of the General Institutional Requirements.

The General Institutional Requirements, grouped under seven overall facets of the operation of a post-secondary educational institution, include mission, authorization, governance, faculty, education program, finances, and public information. The team examined each of the requirements during the visit to verify the University's description of how it meets the requirements in the Self-Study Report.

Mission. The Board of Control approved the current mission statement in 1988 and the 1989 NCA focused evaluation team found the mission statement satisfactory for United States University. The University publishes the mission statement in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins. The mission statement stresses the University's role as "an academic community where the best teaching and learning are available to those in its programs." The mission includes the offering of undergraduate

and graduate degree programs and serving as the "major educational, economic, cultural, and recreational resource" in the region. The University further articulates its mission through its commitment to students, faculty, library resources, special service and outreach programs, the public, and the use of resources. In the judgment of the visiting team, the mission statement is appropriate to an institution of higher education (1). The University confers degrees appropriate for specific courses of study as verified by the team (2).

Authorization

United States University has appropriate legal authorization under State Statutory Law to grant its degrees and meets all legal requirements to operate as an institution of higher education in its region (3). The University documented its authority as a public institution of higher education and its exemption from the Internal Revenue Code (4).

Governance

A Board of Control governs United States University under its authorization by State Statutory Law. The Board of Control establishes University policy and reviews all University programs and activities (5). All members of the Board of Control receive their appointments from the Governor of the State under Statutory Law and perform their collective duties as an autonomous governing entity under the State Constitution (6). The Board of Control has the authority to appoint the University president and made the most recent appointment in 1992 (7). The Board of Control of United States University has authorized the

affiliation of the University with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (8).

Faculty. United States University appoints faculty with earned degrees from accredited institutions appropriate for the level of instruction offered. Approximately 60% of the faculty hold doctoral degrees while another 32% have masters degrees (9). Approximately 95% of the faculty have full-time appointments (10). The faculty through the Academic Senate Committee on undergraduate programs and the Graduate Programs Committee develop, approve, and review all educational programs (11).

Educational Program. United States University confers undergraduate and graduate degrees upon the completion of a prescribed course of study (12). All degree programs have students currently enrolled in them (13). In the team's judgment, the educational programs are compatible with the University's mission and correlate with recognized fields of study in higher education generally. United States University's mission provides for the undergraduate education of students in the liberal arts and sciences and offers undergraduate pre-professional, professional and career-oriented education in the arts and sciences, business, teacher education, technology, and selected human services professions. The University also offers graduate programs and degrees (14). The University requires sufficient rigorous program content and length of study for its appropriately named degrees (15). The team verified in the Self-Study Report, through on-campus evaluation, and in the Bulletin

that appropriate general educational requirements in the Liberal Studies Program fulfill the University's mission and ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry (16). The University has admission policies and practices consistent with its mission and appropriate to its educational programs (17). The University provides all students in the degree programs offered appropriate learning resources, academic support programs, and general support services (18).

Finances. In the course of the evaluation visit, the team verified that United States University follows the recognized practice among public institutions of external audits. An examination of the three most recent financial statements confirmed this requirement (19). The University has established a budget procedure that allocates its resources to support its educational programs through the coordination of planning with budgeting and comparisons with peers (20). After discussion with various groups and individuals as well as examining financial documents, the team determined that the University's financial practices, records, and reports demonstrate fiscal viability (21).

Public Information. The 1994 NCA team verified that the University publishes in its bulletins and other public places accurate information which fairly describes its educational programs and degree requirements, learning resources, admissions policies and practices, academic and non-academic policies directly affecting students, its charges and refund policies, and the academic credentials of faculty and administrators (22). The

University publishes in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins current information about its accredited status (23). The University provides public access to its annual financial statements (24).

Conclusion. Based on the foregoing analysis to determine if United States University fulfills the General Institutional Requirements, the 1994 NCA evaluation team concluded that the University does meet them adequately, and, therefore, satisfies the first requirement for continued accreditation.

JOSEPH GRADY SMOOT

RESUME

Residence: 1809 Heritage Road, Pittsburg Kansas 66762
Telephone: Home 316 231-4234
Office 316 235-4757

Personal

Birth: May 7, 1932, at Winter Haven, Florida
Married: Florence Catherine Rozell, May 30, 1955 (Deceased)
Married: Irma Jean Kopitzke, June 4, 1959
Children: Andrew Christopher Smoot/Born August 22, 1961

Education

1950-1955 Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee
Bachelor of Arts Degree/Business and Economics/History

Editor of Southern Memories Yearbook (1952-1953)
President of Student Association (1953-1954)
President of Senior Class (1954-1955)
Listed in Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities, 1953-1954, 1954-1955

1957-1958 University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky
Master of Arts Degree/History and Political Science

1958-1961 University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky
Doctor of Philosophy Degree/History (1964)

Professional Career

1955-1957 Teacher, Kentucky Secondary Schools
1957-1961 Graduate School, University of Kentucky
1961-1968 Columbia Union College, Takoma Park Maryland
Instructor to Associate Professor of History (1961-1968)
Academic Dean (1965-1968)
1968-1984 Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan
Dean of the Graduate School (1968-1969)
Vice President for Academic Affairs (1969-1976)
President (1976-1984)
1984- Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas
Vice President for Development and Public Relations
1985- Pittsburg State University Foundation, Inc.
Executive Director (1985-); Secretary (1990-)

Memberships

1957-	American Historical Association
1957-	Institute of Early American History and Culture
1984-	National Trust for Historic Preservation
1957-	Organization of American Historians
1958-	Phi Alpha Theta (National History Honorary Society)
1981-	Society for Historians of the Early Republic
1957-	Southern Historical Association

Some Professional Achievements

1979-	North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Consultant Evaluator/30 accreditation visits/16 chairs Commissioner at Large (1987-1991)
1988	Founder, Pittsburg State University Radio Station KRPS
1989	Established the Pittsburg State University Magazine

Community Activities

1984-1986	Pittsburg Area Festival A/Bd of Directors/Founding Member
1987-1992	Pittsburg Salvation Army/Board of Advisers/Chair (1991-1992)
1987-1992	Pittsburg United Way/Board of Directors
1990-1993	Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce Foundation/Board of Directors
1991-	Mount Carmel Medical Center Foundation/Board of Trustees

Civic and Social Clubs

1972-	Rotary International/Pittsburg Rotary Club (1984-) Paul Harris Fellow (1988) Chair, District Scholarship Committee, 1986-1988 Member, District Extension Committee, 1993-1995
1984-	Crestwood Country Club, Pittsburg, Kansas

Publications

1961-	Numerous articles in professional and scholarly journals, book chapters, and professional reports

Hobbies

Collector of Postcards/Postcard historian
Collector of Baseball Cards
Genealogist

Biographical References

1988-	Who's Who in the Midwest (Current 1994-1995)
1992-	Who's Who in Education (Current 1994-1995)
1980-	Who's Who in the World (Current 1993-1994)